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News Sheet of the American Branch of the Anglican Society

MARCH, 1939

The Secretary, who is responsible for this issue of the News Sheet, apologizes for his delay in publishing the News Sheet which should have been printed in February.

An earnest appeal is hereby made to YOU, dear reader, if you do not belong to the Anglican Society, to join it by sending one dollar to the Treasurer. An earnest appeal is also made to EVERY member of the Society to obtain ONE new member. The Society not only needs a greatly increased membership to spread its principles, it needs that larger membership for the special purpose of having more money to publish pamphlets explaining its principles.

There is real need for these pamphlets for which a good deal of inquiry is made. One such has just been published: "The Altar and Its Ornaments," by the Rev. F. W. Fitts, Rector of St. John's Parish, Roxbury, Mass. This may be procured from the Morehouse-Gorham Co., 14 E. 41st Street, New York City, for 15c, or from the Secretary.

Other pamphlets the Society desires to publish are American editions of the Alcuin Club books "A Server's Manual" and "A Directory of Ceremonial." It would meet a real need and do much to spread knowledge of Anglican ways if the Society could issue a Calendar, with the Trial Lectionary soon to be adopted by General Convention.

The annual meeting was held as advertised on January 18, 1939, at 5:15 P. M. in the Parish House of Trinity Chapel, New York. We had the usual number of interested people. The President was in the chair.

The Treasurer reported all bills paid and a balance on hand of $293.00.

The Executive Committee reported the publishing at 15c a copy of a pamphlet by the Rev. F. W. Fitts "The Altar and Its Ornaments." The Secretary was appointed to take charge of the sale of this pamphlet.

The Extension Committee reported publishing three issues of the News Sheet; and also the holding of two very successful regional meetings, one at Christ Church, Ballston Spa, at a Rural Deanery in January, 1938, when the President, the Rev. Dr. Sutton, and the Secretary made addresses, the other at Zion Church, Manchester Center, Vermont, in June, when the Rev. F. F. E. Blake and the Rev. W. J. Brown made addresses.

The nucleus of a "Traveling Library" has been begun; any member may borrow a book by writing to the Rev. W. J. Brown, the Rectory, Manchester, Vermont.

The volumes now on hand are: The Parson's Handbook (fourth edition) by Dearmer; A Short Handbook of Public Worship by Dearmer; Liturgy in the Parish by six members of the Alcuin Club.

The old officers were re-elected: President, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Oldham, Bishop of Albany; Vice President, the Very Rev. Dr. Milo H. Gates, Dean of New York; Secretary, the Rev. Charles E. Hill, Christ Church Rectory, Ballston Spa, N. Y.; Treasurer, Mr. Richard A. Zerega, 27 W. 44th Street, New York.

The President appointed the following committee: Executive, the Rev. Dr. Sutton, the Rev. F. W. Fitts, the Rev. F. F. E. Blake, the Rev. W. J. Brown, the Very Rev. Dean Welles (the Officers are members ex officio).

Extension: the Rev. W. J. Brown, the Rev. F. F. E. Blake, the Very Rev. Dean Welles, the Rev. Sydney R. Peters.

Finance: the Rev. Canon Daniels, the Rev. N. S. Howell, Mr. H. A. Vandyck, Miss Ellen S. Motter.

After the meeting the third annual dinner was held at the Parkside Hotel, Gramercy Park. Bishop Oldham, the President, presided and in his address pointed out the great danger involved in the clergy playing fast and loose with the Prayer Book. Evidences of lawlessness were everywhere and the need for the Church to set an example of obedience to law was something to which the clergy generally might well give heed. The Bishop also discussed the importance of generosity and tolerance toward those who do not follow our ways referring to the recent article in The English Catholic on the use of Altar lights. Need for publications that would adequately help others to follow good liturgical practices was also stressed. The Bishop especially recommended the preparation of a manual for Servers based on the recent publication of "A Server's Manual" by the Alcuin Club. Such a handbook in accordance with the American rite was greatly needed.

The Reverend Canon Louis Daniels spoke briefly concerning the value and power of beautiful services and the deep appreciation of such services on the part of those unfamiliar with the Church. He expressed the hope that soon we should be able to have as a

part of our Annual gathering a service with all the proper appointments rendered according to the best traditions of the Anglican rite. Mention was also made of the great lack of information concerning the Society and its aims on the part of Church folk generally.

The Reverend W. J. Brown's address dealt with the importance of a right understanding and belief of the Church's teaching on the part of every member. Five reasons were given for the departure of Christians from the actual truth. (1) A desire on the part of people generally to get rid of the element of mystery in religion. (2) The passive acceptance on the part of Church folk of whatever they may be taught. (3) The feeling that the Church and its teaching might be more acceptable were we to give up rigidity of requirement, and manifest a liberal and lax attitude toward those without. (4) The pressure of those who are anxious for Church unity regardless of the truths involved. The idea of unity as a means of efficiency. (5) The difficulty of defining Christian truths and revelation with human words. The indefiniteness of human words.

The speaker pointed out that the ignorance of today consisted largely in the vast amount of incorrect knowledge possessed by people rather than the lack of knowledge. He reminded his hearers also that truth and real beauty in liturgical as well as in architectural matters were just as necessary and important in the small and seemingly unimportant mission of the Church as in the larger and more influential congregations.

A Regional meeting is planned for Rogation Monday, May 15, 1939, at the Cathedral of All Saints, Albany, when the Holy Eucharist will be celebrated at 11 A. M., Luncheon to follow at 12:30, and addresses from 2 to 4 P. M. A cordial invitation is extended to every one whether members or not to be present.

In Christ Church, Ballston Spa the "Lenten Array" was hung up for the first time on Ash Wednesday. It is greatly admired.

A STUDY OF THE PRAYER OF CONSECRATION (Continued)

By the Rev. F. F. E. Blake

(The first part of this article was published in the Autumn issue of the News Sheet and was an explanation of the reason for the Prayer and its proper character.)

A scientific prayer of consecration has a definite formula. It is Trinitarian. The only exception to this anywhere is the Roman Canon of the Mass. It itself is the poorest prayer in use in Catholic Christendom. It is hard to understand why so many people seem to think that it is the summum bonum of Catholic liturgical ex-

pression. Its only virtue is its extreme age and association with the great saints of the West. Roman liturgical scholars have a hard time defending it, and for many years have been trying to rearrange it into its original form. There are abrupt transitions, obscure phrases, many duplications, and complicated ceremonial the meaning of which has been completely lost in the mazes of antiquity. The other great liturgies of the Church all begin with thanksgiving to the Father for his gift of redemption and its memorial; go on to commemorate the whole redemptive life of our Lord and to offer the eucharistic gifts in union with that life; and then invoke the Holy Spirit upon ourselves oblation, that they may be hallowed and that we may worthily receive them.

The whole action is one. Nothing is allowed that interrupts that action. The old enemy time does not enter. It is an eternal action. It is what the Prayer Book calls "the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ." It is not trying simply to make something, something that it was not before in time, but it is trying to offer something.

We interpret something that we have no right to interpret apart from the universal Church when we try to fit medieval theology and ceremonial to it. (For that matter medieval ceremonialists were much more careful in their interpretive ceremonial than we are in spite of our superior knowledge!) No professor of theology or liturgics in America has ever taught the mechanical theories that we accept in our practice, and yet we go on doing them because of our preconceived ideas of what is and what is not Catholic. It is hard in any sphere of life to make preconceived ideas fit the truth.

There is no liturgy in use in Catholic Christendom that even for one moment remotely suggests that the elements are consecrated by the Narrative of the Institution. In the Roman Mass the narrative of institution is preceded by the Quam oblationem, which is a definite consecratory prayer before the Institution Words. The English Prayer Book also has a definite consecratory prayer before the Institution, "Hear Us, O Merciful Father." Neither of these liturgies nor any other, in their official language even dream that the Words of Institution are the sole consecration. Indeed the Words of Institution are not our Lord's words of consecration at all; but they are his Words of Administration. "When he had given thanks" i. e., when he had said his prayer of thanksgiving and dedication over the bread and wine, then He considered them consecrated to their sacred use, and he administered the sacrament to his disciples, saying, "This is my body." It is hard to see how anyone, reading the New Testament and the Liturgies of the Church, can call the Words of Institution, the Words of Consecration, when they are so obviously the Words of Administration.